*Roderick Sprague*

# Carved Stone Heads of the Columbia River and Sasquatch

Several prehistoric carvings collected in the lower Columbia River valley share non-human but anthropoid features. A relationship between these stone heads and Sasquatch phenomena is suggested.

In an editorial published in 1970 I wrote "to the best of my knowledge no one has suggested in print that perhaps the carved stone anthropoid ape heads of James Terry and later workers from the John Day region on the Columbia River could well be associated with the sasquatch phenomena."[1] Since then, a review of the literature has revealed that the editorial was incorrect in stating "James Terry and later workers" because in reality James Terry was not the first to report these stone carvings. The first published mention of the Columbia River carvings is by the pioneer paleontologist O. C. Marsh in 1877. In an address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in Nashville, he said:

> Among many stone carvings which I saw there [Columbia River] were a number of heads, which so strongly resemble those of apes that the likeness at once suggests itself.[2]

The first explicit report of anthropoid carvings on the lower Columbia comes from a brief article entitled "Relics in Eastern Oregon" by the Reverend Myron Eells. In this report Eells described the collection of Mrs. J. H. Kunzie of Umatilla Landing, Oregon: "she has a third baboon similar to those in Portland and East Portland, which has been traced to the region of Eastern Oregon. This one is seventeen inches around, five and a half high and weighs seven pounds."[3]

In a second article in the annual report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1886 Eells described private collections that he observed in Oregon in the

1880's. The three major collections belonged to Dr. D. Rafferty, of East Portland, H. C. Stevens, of Oregon City, and Mrs. Helen A. Kunzie, of Umatilla, Oregon. Eells describes these anthropoid carvings as follows:

> *Baboons.*-He [Dr. Rafferty] also has a baboon with the eyes, forehead, and nostrils plainly marked; it is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, 4 inches high, weighs 6 pounds 10 ounces, and is of volcanic rock. Mr. Steel, of Portland, has another well-made baboon, which is $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches around the body, and weighs $13\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. The eyes are an inch in diameter; it is $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches between the center of the two eyes, 4 inches from the eyes to the end of the nose, and 2 inches across the nose. He obtained it from the Dalles and has traced it some distance further east of the Cascade Mountains. Mrs. Kunzie has another of these stone baboons which likewise came from eastern Oregon, and Mr. Stevens has a fourth, very nearly the same size as that of Dr. Rafferty's, and all of them seem to be of similar stone. Where the Indians of this region obtained the idea of such perfect baboons is a mystery; or were the stones, in their present shape, imported?[4]

No further trace of the carvings belonging to Rafferty, Steel, and Stevens has been found. It is possible that one or two of these could be represented by the heads illustrated later in Terry[5]; however, without detailed measurement and weighing of these specimens this is left at the level of speculation. The one head belonging to Mrs. Kunzie is later mentioned in a dissertation by Galloway[6], but no location is indicated for that specimen.

In 1891 James Terry, a researcher working with the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, published his well-known but rare work entitled *Sculptured Anthropoid Ape Heads*, apparently as a private venture. In this work he describes three sculptured heads. The first (Plates 33 and 34) was collected by Terry in 1882 and is still in the American Museum of Natural History, James Terry Collection. Terry does not explain whether it was collected in the field or from a private collector but Skiff[7] suggests it was excavated. The fact that it was collected in 1882 would argue against it being one of those described by Eells.

The second specimen (Plates 35 and 36) was collected by O.C. Marsh and is still in the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University. No date is given for the acquisition of this specimen; however, Terry[8] quotes Marsh's 1877 work, so logically it should have been collected prior to 1877.

The third specimen (Plate 37) was collected by Thomas Condon, an Oregon geologist. This specimen is reputedly in the Museum of Natural His-

tory, University of Oregon; however, verification of this has not been not received.

Except for one brief note which unfortunately moved the location to the Northwest Coast,[9] little attention was paid to these carvings until the publication of Frederick W. Skiff's *Adventures in Americana* in 1935. Skiff mentions Terry's field work and adds that his own collection of some thirty examples had recently been moved to the Museum of the American Indian in New York City (Heye Foundation).[10]

N. G. Seaman, in *Indian Relics of the Pacific Northwest*,[11] illustrates two heads found by R. H. Miller, the first of which is so poorly executed that it will not be considered here. The second head (Plate 38) is currently owned by George Marshall, Portland, who generously provided an opportunity to observe this specimen first hand.

The only example that has been observed in excavation by a professional archaeologist, thus giving us some idea of context, was one recovered by an amateur working in conjunction with the University of Washington excavations at Wakemap Mound in the early 1950's. B. Robert Butler has illustrated this one example previously and provided the illustration presented here (Plate 39). He places the carving in the Wakemap Middle Period, thus giving it a date of 1500 B.C. to A.D. 500.[12]

The publication by Paul S. Wingert of *Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Pacific Northwest* coincided with an exhibit at the Portland Art Museum. Wingert lists sixteen carvings in the Deschutes-John Day style of which six or seven could be classified as anthropoid carvings. Wingert gives an excellent general description for all of these works and suggests that they "closely adhere to a basic type."[13] He goes on to say that:

> the cranium is shallow; the eyes large, protruding ovals; the nose wide, convex and terminating in spreading nostrils; and the mouth large, with full lips, and sometimes partially open. Below the mouth, the protruding face recedes sharply, and in some examples folds of loose flesh are represented under the chin.[14]

All of those carvings of interest to this study he describes as being of animals and suggests that they are mountain sheep or mountain goats. Galloway completely rejects the idea that these carvings could be "anthropoid or ape heads, [but] represent quite clearly the image of the human face."[15] Several specimens at the Maryhill Museum near Wishram, Washington include both an excellent example of a true mountain sheep carving[16] and of one extremely interesting carving with no provenience listed in the museum

records (Plate 40). This specimen is included among those illustrated and discussed later despite the lack of known provenience and authentication because it is known to have been in the museum collection for many years and because of the excellent workmanship not at all typical of several known fakes. It is also considered because of one outstanding anatomical feature to be discussed later. The final carving illustrated (Plate 41) was recovered by Dr. Harold Bergen of Yakima from a burial site in The Dalles area in 1960.

A stone carving contained in the Oregon Historical Society collection was donated by J. P. Lucas sometime prior to the mid 1920's. This carving is illustrated in Wingert,[17] and is a classic example of a carving not representing a Sasquatch but probably a seal.

Of all the anthropomorphic stone carvings from the lower Columbia that were available for study either through photographs or actual inspection, only the seven illustrated here were deemed worthy of further study.[18] All the others were eliminated because they were easily identifiable as representing human faces, mountain sheep, or seals, or their pedigrees were not sufficiently established to exclude the possibility of modern fakes. Future investigators should include the collections of Lloyd McLeod, The Dalles County Historical Museum, and the Museum of the American Indian.

In the period before the turn of the century, when little was known of the paleontological record of primates in the New World and even less was known of the peopling of the area, researchers immediately recognized the Terry, Marsh, and Condon carvings as representing primates. In more recent times, as people became more sophisticated and recognized that this explanation was not scientifically acceptable, both professionals and amateurs alike rejected the idea of these being anthropoid or even primate in appearance. Wingert and Galloway especially reject the earlier interpretation of these carvings. B. Robert Butler ridicules the idea that these could be representations of anthropoids and states emphatically that the parallel lines above the eyes on The Dalles specimen and others represent the horns of mountain sheep.[19]

After assembling the collection of figures illustrated here I presented them for comments to several Pacific Northwest zoologists. With one notable exception of a very broadminded biologist with a strong commitment to the scientific method, there was a perfect correlation between those who knew what I was up to in identifying them as not anthropoid and those who were innocent in identifying them as anthropoid. Some zoologists described the carvings as looking "extremely monkey or ape like, where are they from?" When the location was indicated the reaction was either one of anger or a concerted effort to erase their former comments. Thus, my conclusion based

on the help of unsuspecting zoologists is that the seven specimens most closely resemble higher primates.

John Green, in an address presented at this conference, listed the outstanding characteristics of the Sasquatch head as derived from "about a dozen reports." These include: no hair on the head, no neck, flat face, flat nose, sloped forehead, and heavy brow ridges. Since the carvings studied here represent only heads, the question of the neck cannot be answered. The type of basalt used does not lend itself well to indicating hair, so we are forced to exclude that criterion also. But there can be no question that all specimens clearly represent a flat face and a flat nose. The Marshall specimen (Plate 38) and the Butler example (Plate 39) are both illustrated in other publications in an orientation that would argue against their resemblance to primates. Likewise, the unknown specimen from Maryhill Museum (Plate 40) is displayed in the museum in such an orientation as to argue against this interpretation. However, the specimens have been oriented here in what I think is a more likely position.

The sloped forehead does not appear in any specimens, especially when the orientation is adjusted to account for the flat face. The final criterion, heavy brow ridges, is again very evident in all the specimens illustrated. This is the portion of the carvings that other investigators would interpret as representing horns. I see this as representing not only supraorbital ridges but also folds of skin characteristic, for example, of adult male gorillas.

The one specimen from the Maryhill Museum is also of interest because is possesses what could be best described as a sagittal crest. The mouth on this specimen does not exhibit the grinning teeth typical of most of the other specimens, however; but the positioning of the nostrils, the bulging eyes, and the heavy brow ridges are all in character.

In summary, there seems to be a unity among the seven specimens that separates them from carvings of mountain sheep, seals, and human faces. The characteristics that draw them together are the same characteristics that lead unbiased observers to identify them as primate in character. These characteristics also have a strong correlation with those characteristics reported for the Sasquatch face and head. While not providing proof of the existence of the Sasquatch, this correlation certainly provides a working hypothesis for analysis of other undescribed stone carvings from the lower Columbia River.

# Notes

1. Roderick Sprague, "Editorial," *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* 4, no. 2(1970): 127–28. Reprinted in *The Scientist Looks at the Sasquatch,* ed. Roderick Sprague and Grover Krantz (Moscow, Idaho: University Press of Idaho, 1977), pp. 27–29.
2. O. C. Marsh, "Introduction and Succession of Vertebrate Life in America," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Nashville, Tenn , 30 August 1877. Published as "Ancient Life in America," *Scientific American Supplement* 4, no. 90(1877): 1436–37 and 4, no. 91(1877): 1449–51.
3. *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 8, no. 3(1886): 165.
4. Myron Eells, "The Stone Age of Oregon," *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution for the Year Ending June 30, 1886,* Pt. 1, p. 293.
5. James Terry, *Sculptured Anthropoid Ape Heads* (New York: J.J. Little, 1891).
6. John C. Galloway, 'Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Western United States," (Ph. D. diss., Columbia University, 1956), Plate 100.
7. Frederick W. Skiff, *Adventures in Americana* (Portland, Ore.: Metropolitan Press, 1935), p. 186.
8. *Sculptured Anthropoid Ape Heads,* pp. 6–7.
9. [Anonymous], "Monkeys on the Northwest Coast," *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 13, no. 3(1891): 181–82.
10. Skiff, *Adventures,* p. 186. Unfortunately the Museum was in the process of recataloguing their collections when I was researching this paper, and no information could be gathered on this series of carvings.
11. (Portland, Ore.: Binfords and Mort, 1946), pp. 48–49.
12. See B. Robert Butler, "Art of the Lower Columbia Valley," *Archaeology* 10, no. 3(1957): 158–65, and "A Tentative History of Self-Handled Mauls at The Dalles of the Lower Columbia," *Tebiwa* 7, no. 2(1964): 37–41.
13. (Portland, Ore.: Portland Art Museum, 1952), pp. 18–19, 33.
14. Ibid.
15. "Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Western United States," p. 159.
16. Wingert, *Prehistoric Stone Sculpture of the Pacific Northwest,* Figure 30.
17. Ibid., Figure 29.
18. Those aiding in the research, not already mentioned in the text or figure captions include: Joan E. Cohen, Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University; Emory Strong, Skamania, Washington; Lloyd McLeod, The Dalles, Oregon; Dorothy Brokaw and Karen LaFollette, Maryhill Museum; Dale Archibald, Oregon Historical Society Museum; and Katherine Gates and Polly Eyerly, Portland Art Museum.
19. Personal communication, 1978.

Plate 33. The carved stone heads on the following pages were collected in the Columbia River valley. Front view of specimen collected by James Terry, now housed in the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

Plate 34. Side view of the same specimen. Roderick Sprague discusses the possible relationship between these carvings and Sasquatch phenomena on pages 229-34.

Plate 35. Front view of specimen collected by O.C. Marsh, now in the Peabody Museum, Yale University.

Plate 36. Side view of the same specimen. Note the pronounced, primate-like ridges above the eyes.

Plate 37. Front and side views of a specimen collected by Thomas Condon, now reputedly in the Museum of Natural History, University of Oregon.

Plate 38. Three-quarter view of specimen collected by R.H. Miller, now in the private collection of George Marshall, Portland, Oregon.

Plate 39. Side view of specimen collected by an amateur at The Dalles, Washington, now probably in the Burke Memorial Museum, University of Washington.

Plate 40. Three-quarter view of an unidentified specimen housed in the Maryhill Museum near Wishram, Washington.

Plate 41. Front view of specimen collected and owned by Harold Bergen, Yakima, Washington.